

Remarks/Arguments:

Claim Status

Claims 7-9, 11-14, 16 and 17 are currently pending. Claims 10 and 15 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. Claims 7-9, 11-14 and 16 have been amended to improve their clarity. Support for the amendments to claims 7-9, 11-14 and 16 and new claim 17 may be found, for example, in paragraphs 5-8, 12 and 13 and FIGS. 1 and 2 of the published application.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 7, 10 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent App. Pub. No. 2004/050618 to Morocco. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection of these claims and respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over Morocco for the reasons set forth below.

Independent claim 7, as amended, recites limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Morocco, namely:

a first removably mountable connection pipe for fluidically connecting the mufflers of the exhaust-gas-carrying pipes, wherein the first removably mountable connection pipe includes **two inlet ports and an outlet port**, each inlet port of the first removably mountable connection pipe being configured to be **removably mounted** to a single port of a respective muffler to receive exhaust gases from the muffler, and **said outlet port of said first removably mountable connection pipe being configured to discharge the exhaust gases to a location outside of the internal-combustion engine**, and

a second removably mountable connection pipe for fluidically connecting the mufflers of the exhaust-gas-carrying pipes, wherein the second removably mountable connection pipe includes two ports, **each port of the second removably mountable connection pipe being configured to be removably mounted** to a port of a respective muffler to muffle noise created by the internal combustion engine.

Figure 16 of the Morocco reference discloses two exhaust sound attenuation devices (items 528a and 528b) that are interconnected by two pipes (items 530). There is no indication that the pipes 530 are 'removably mountable' to the exhaust sound attenuation devices. Moreover, neither pipe 530 includes "two inlet ports and an outlet port." Moreover,

neither pipe 530 includes an outlet port that is configured to "discharge the exhaust gases to a location outside of the internal-combustion engine." Each pipe 530 is provided to direct exhaust gases into an opposing muffler.

Marocco therefore fails to disclose or suggest every element of Applicants' claimed invention, as it is recited in claim 7. Accordingly, for the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 7, as amended, is patentable over Marocco and should be allowed. Claim 12 is dependent upon claim 7, and therefore should also be allowed at least as being dependent upon an allowable base claim. Reconsideration of claims 7 and 12 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 8, 9 and 13-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent App. Pub. No. 2004/050618 to Marocco in view of DE 20115656 to Faurecia. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection of these claims and respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over those references for the reasons set forth below.

Claims 8, 9, 13 and 14 depend from independent claim 7 and include all of the limitations thereof. Independent claim 7 recites features that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Marocco or Faurecia, namely:

a first removably mountable connection pipe for fluidically connecting the mufflers of the exhaust-gas-carrying pipes, wherein the first removably mountable connection pipe includes **two inlet ports and an outlet port**, each inlet port of the first removably mountable connection pipe being configured to be **removably mounted** to a single port of a respective muffler to receive exhaust gases from the muffler, and **said outlet port of said first removably mountable connection pipe being configured to discharge the exhaust gases to a location outside of the internal-combustion engine**, and

a second removably mountable connection pipe for fluidically connecting the mufflers of the exhaust-gas-carrying pipes, wherein the second removably mountable connection pipe includes two ports, **each port of the second removably mountable connection pipe being configured to be removably mounted** to a port of a respective muffler to muffle noise created by the internal combustion engine.

Marocco fails to disclose all of the features of amended claim 7 as described previously and Faurecia fails to overcome the deficiencies of Morocco. Specifically, Faurecia discloses two units 4a and 4b positioned in a casing 6. The casing 6 comprises two half-tubes 62 and 64 (see figure 2 and page 4, lines 26-31). The casing 6 includes a tubular branch piece 18, in the form of a Y-pipe, which is **integrated** with the casing 6 (see page 3, line 20 to page 4, line 8). Because the tubular branch piece 18 is **integrated** with the casing 6 and the units 4a and 4b are positioned within the casing 6, the tubular branch piece 18 is not removably mounted to a muffler. Moreover, the tubular branch piece 18 does not include inlet ports that are removably mounted to a port of a respective muffler.

Accordingly, because claim 7 includes limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Morocco and Faurecia, *prima facie* obviousness cannot be established based on those cited references. Reconsideration of claims 8, 9, 13 and 14, which depend from claim 7, is respectfully requested.

Claims 11 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morocco in view of Faurecia and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,907,134 to Nording. Claims 11 and 16 depend from independent claim 7 and include all of the limitations thereof. Independent claim 7 recites features that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Morocco, Faurecia or Nording, namely:

a first removably mountable connection pipe for fluidically connecting the mufflers of the exhaust-gas-carrying pipes, wherein the first removably mountable connection pipe includes **two inlet ports and an outlet port**, each inlet port of the first removably mountable connection pipe being configured to be **removably mounted** to a single port of a respective muffler to receive exhaust gases from the muffler, and **said outlet port of said first removably mountable connection pipe being configured to discharge the exhaust gases to a location outside of the internal-combustion engine**, and

a second removably mountable connection pipe for fluidically connecting the mufflers of the exhaust-gas-carrying pipes, wherein the second removably mountable connection pipe includes two ports, **each port of the second removably mountable connection pipe being configured to be removably mounted** to a port of a respective muffler to muffle noise created by the internal combustion engine.

Both Morocco and Faurecia fail to disclose all of the features of amended claim 7 as described previously. Nording discloses neither a first removably mountable connection pipe

nor a second removably mountable connection pipe, and therefore fails to overcome the deficiencies of Marocco and Faurecia. Accordingly, because claim 7 includes limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Marocco and Faurecia, *prima facie* obviousness cannot be established based on those cited references. Reconsideration of claims 11 and 16 is respectfully requested.

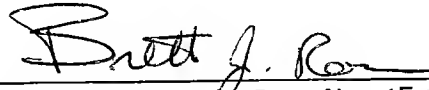
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Conclusion

In view of the amendments in the claims and the remarks set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is now in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes an interview will advance the prosecution of this application, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned to arrange the same.

Respectfully submitted,



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